

Count de Vergennes, the French Minister, April, 1778, I gather from these conversations that the opposition, as well as the ministry, are perverted by the present situation of affairs, and know not what way to turn themselves, or whether it is best to go backward or forward, or what steps to take to extricate that nation from its present dangerous situation.

Mr. Hartley, with the consent of Lord North, made a confidential proposition to Dr. Franklin, the next year, April, 1779, for a truce of five or seven years, but the plan was not approved of by Franklin.

The British Ministry had resolved never to acknowledge the act of the American Congress of July 4, 1776, declaring independence. Peace the Americans could have had at any moment after 1778; every grievance would have been redressed; the mother country then required no other condition from the colonies than that they should enter into such commercial arrangements as would have given to the trade of Great Britain superior advantages to that of other nations. The power of Parliament was deemed absolute and unlimited, but the government of Lord North's administration was willing to admit, in a treaty, limitations and exceptions to it in favor of America. But the declaration of independence had added a new feature to the war; other questions were absorbed by that vast and simple situation. This was the only basis on which America, when the commission for reconciliation was appointed in 1778, would treat for peace. But England was not yet prepared for that concession, nor could a ministry have been formed that would have had the courage to have submitted to that act of humiliation. Lord Chatham, it is well known, declared himself in his last speech, in April, 1778, opposed to the dismemberment of the "ancient and noble British monarchy." Indeed, a motion made in the House of Commons by Mr. Powney, in April, 1778, to authorize the commissioners, employed to treat with America, to acknowledge the independence of the States, though supported by Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, seems to have been generally disapproved, and was finally rejected without a division. Commissioners were, however, appointed under Lord North's act, who proceeded to America, and landed at Philadelphia about the 1st of June, 1778. They were the Earl of Carlisle, Governor Johnston, and Mr. Eden; but the Continental Congress refused to treat with them.

The administration of Lord North made no further decisive attempt for a cessation of hostilities. They held to the terms proposed in the commission of February, 1778, with a zeal and resolution that finally proved fatal to them. This effort of the mother country to conclude a peace with the United States is interesting as a matter of history, although it was not accompanied with the least success, nor can it in any way be connected with the treaty of 1783. "But it belongs (says Lyman) to the diplomatic history of the period, and it is worthy of attention, as illustrating the decided progress, the rebellion in the Massachusetts," as the first Lord of the treasury was in the habit of calling it, had already made in the course of four years. It will not escape observation that these terms, if embraced, substantially amounted to independence, or, very speedily must have resulted in that state of things."

In 1781 a proposition was made by the imperial courts of Russia and Austria to arrange, in a Congress under their mediation, the terms of a general peace. This business occupied the attention of the European courts during several months. France was anxious for peace, and endeavored to render the mediation effectual. The terms were obviously inadmissible with Americans, as the independence of the United States was not made the basis of the mediation. Austria and Russia were not much disposed, at that time, to acknowledge American independence. The French Minister at St. Petersburg wrote to Mr. Dana, American Commissioner at that court, September, 1780, and remarked, "It is the design of the mediating powers to avoid committing themselves by acknowledging the independence of the United States, till England herself shall have pronounced such an acknowledgment."

Lord North's administration was finally prostrated in the British House of Commons, by a resolution offered by General Conway on the 27th of February, 1782, and which was carried by a vote of 234 to 215. It was, in substance, a resolution of a motion which had been often unsuccessfully moved by the whigs against further prosecution of offensive war with America. During the interval from the time of the passage of Lord North's conciliatory bills, in 1778, to the dissolution of Parliament in September, 1780, the cause of the revolution made no progress in the House of Commons. The opposition made no gains from the ministerial side; on the contrary, they appear to have been convinced that the question of peace or war, however much discussed in Parliament, was not there to be decided. America, itself, was the scene of action; and the event proved that in this country the time and the terms of the treaty were to be dictated. The indignation of the British nation was aroused at the alliance of the United States with France, their ancient enemy. One party was desperate and indignant, and the other exhausted and disgusted. The proposition for dissolving Parliament was, to the whigs, sudden and unexpected. They were taken by surprise, and appear to have remained astonished and inactive, while their opponents were prepared and vigorous. Of the one hundred and thirteen new members who were then elected, the great majority were Tories. The new Parliament was, of course, highly favorable to the existing ministry; and on the meeting of the two houses, the Tories carried their will to the King by a majority of 92 in the House of Commons. It was in this house, at the following session, that General Conway, a whig, carried his motion above referred to, against ministers, by a majority of 19. Such was the influence of the capture of the army of Cornwallis, by the allied Americans and French, on a British House of Commons, with a large Tory majority. As success grew more hopeless, and disasters accumulated, disapprobation of the war had increased to the nation, and the ministerial majority had gradually diminished in the Commons. The scales were for a short time nearly balanced; several times they vibrated, now the fall was decisive, and the war party kicked the beam. After several further struggles, Lord North announced to the House that there was no administration, his Majesty having come to a full determination of changing his ministers. His lordship thereupon took leave of the House as minister, thanking them for the honorable support they had given him through so long a course of years, and in so many trying occasions.

A whig administration was soon after formed, with the Marquis of Rockingham at its head. Mr. Fox and Lord Shelburne were the Secretaries of State. This ministry were distracted by a want of unanimity, and was soon dissolved by the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, on the first of July, 1782. The whig party were divided upon the subject of America. Lord Shelburne and his friends were extremely unwilling to acknowledge her independence, as had been advocated by Rockingham, Fox, and other whigs. Lord Shelburne was appointed successor to the Marquis, with the expectation that he would manage to retain some hold upon America. Fox and his friends, who saw no hope of peace while such a condition was insisted upon, resigned, and the Shelburne cabinet was formed, in the vain hope of carrying on the government, when such men as Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, were excluded from the whig councils, and the Tory opposition was strong and powerful. The prorogation of Parliament prevented any display of the strength or weakness of this new ministry. Upon the meeting of Parliament in December, 1782, it was discovered that the question which had formed the ostensible cause of the schism in the Rockingham cabinet had been abandoned, and that Lord Shelburne and his friends had at length resolved to concede the absolute independence of the United States.

In September, 1782, the Shelburne cabinet was

thorized their commissioner at Paris, Richard Oswald, to acknowledge the independence of the colonies. This is the first instruction given by the British ministry in which it was proposed to recognize the declaration of Congress of July 4, 1776. A great and immediate progress was now made in the preliminaries. America could not be desirous of continuing the war, but she had shown her ability to maintain her Declaration of Independence. As early as August, 1779, Congress prepared instructions, and in September following appointed John Adams, of Massachusetts, a commissioner to make a treaty of peace, with subsequent instructions to conclude a commercial treaty with Great Britain. Mr. Adams went without delay to Europe, being subsequently appointed Minister to Holland. But he was not authorized to make propositions to the British government, and it does not appear that the United States, at any time during the war, and after the act of July 4, 1776, made any attempt at negotiation, either directly, or by means of her allies. Congress, at all times, rejected, with great emphasis, even the project of a short truce. This was considered highly dangerous to the liberties of the country, though a favorite notion with many of the best friends of America in England. The commission under which the preliminaries of the treaty were actually concluded, was issued by the Continental Congress in June, 1781. It empowered John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens and Thomas Jefferson, or the majority of them, or such of them as may assemble, to repair to such place as might be fixed upon for opening negotiations for peace, and, in the name of the United States, to conclude with the ambassadors or commissioners of other powers, treaties of peace, &c. All the commissioners were in Europe during the discussions respecting the treaty, except Mr. J. Jay, who was in America, and declined the appointment. Franklin, Jay and Oswald met at Paris in September, and were joined in October by Adams and, in fact, to sign the treaty, by Laurens. The provisional treaty of peace was signed at Paris, the 30th of November, 1782, on the part of America, by Messrs. Adams, Franklin, Jay, and Laurens, and by Richard Oswald on the part of Great Britain.

The preliminary articles being ratified within the time specified by the respective governments, the definitive treaty of peace, substantially a copy of the provisional one, was signed by Messrs. Franklin, Adams, and Jay, for the United States, and by Mr. David Hartley for England, at Paris, September 3, 1783. This treaty was unanimously ratified by Congress on the 14th of February, 1784. Hostilities had ceased by proclamation, in April, 1783. The British ministry refused to insert an article into the treaty on the subject of commerce.

The treaty of 1783 was an instrument of a peculiar character. It differed in its most essential circumstances from most of the treaties made between nations. It was a treaty of partition; a treaty to ascertain the boundaries and the rights of the nation which the mother country acknowledged to be created by that instrument. Independence was one of the stipulations made in favor of America by Great Britain; boundaries were another; the fisheries a third—for the mother country asserted equal claims for all these rights or privileges. This treaty was exceedingly favorable and honorable to the United States, and was negotiated by the American Commissioners with great ability and uncommon address. They took advantage, very successfully, of the ancient jealousy and enmity that existed between England and the house of Bourbon.

America obtained an acknowledgment of her independence in the fullest manner, as well as a confirmation of the original boundaries of the colonies, and a recognition of her rights and privileges in the fisheries. She made a much more favorable treaty with Great Britain than either Spain or France did at the same time.

In England the treaty with America was exceedingly unpopular, and taken together with the concessions Great Britain was absolutely under the necessity of making at the time to France and Spain, threw the Shelburne ministry into a minority in the first debate in the House of Commons, when the provisional treaty with America, and the preliminary treaties between Great Britain, France, and Spain, were laid before Parliament, in February, 1783. A resolution offered in the House of Commons by Lord John Cavendish, declared that "the concessions made to the adversaries of Great Britain by the provisional treaty, and preliminary articles, were greater than they were entitled to, either from the actual situation of their respective possessions, or from their comparative strength." This resolution was carried against the ministry by a vote of 207 to 190. The great object of the majority was to compel Lord Shelburne and some of his adherents to resign their places in the cabinet. This was effected by the extraordinary coalition of Lord North and Mr. Fox and their friends, composed of both Tories and Whigs. About three-fourths of the coalition were friends of Lord North, and on a trial of his own strength, Fox, who had calculated upon ninety followers, found himself supported by only forty-six votes against two hundred and nineteen. The coalition, on the first trial against the ministers, carried amendments to the address to the King, by a majority of sixteen, the numbers being two hundred and twenty-four to two hundred and eight. The Earl of Shelburne and his friends having resigned after their defeat, a coalition administration was formed on the 24 of April, at the head of which was placed the Duke of Portland; and Lord North and Mr. Fox were made Secretaries of State. By this coalition ministry, in April, 1783, David Hartley was sent to Paris, in place of Mr. Oswald, to complete the negotiations between Great Britain and the United States before mentioned. The negotiators, however, were unable to agree on any alterations in the former articles; nor were they able to agree on arrangements for the future commercial intercourse between the two countries. Mr. Hartley therefore joined the American commissioners in signing the definitive treaty of peace on the 3d of September, 1783. The American Commissioners not having succeeded in making a treaty of commerce, were compelled to defer the consideration of that subject. The English sought for delay, as they had not determined what course to pursue in trading with their late colonies; or they might have had hopes that the union of the colonies, although successful in the Revolution, was not thoroughly consolidated. Evidently an expectation was entertained that the American confederacy would dissolve from weakness, and some portion of the wreck would seek again the support of, and union with, the mother country—a sentiment which was universal at that time throughout Europe.

The English government did not pay much attention to the concerns of America, for the first five or six years after the peace of 1783. The affairs of the continent of Europe, India, and domestic matters of existing interest, occupied the public mind and the attention of ministers far more than American politics, or commercial intercourse with the newly acknowledged independent States. The British government sent no minister to the United States during the time of the confederation—refused to agree to any commercial arrangement whatever—and contented itself with the barren but provoking satisfaction of holding, contrary to the treaty, the forts on the northern and western frontiers.

Great anxiety naturally existed in America on the subject of commercial intercourse, which was left in an unsettled state with England, although other European commercial nations readily entered into treaties of commerce with the United States. In the meantime, the union rushed into a most ruinous commerce with Great Britain, that in a short time added immensely to the evils of the Revolutionary war and the weakness of the confederacy were daily causing. The very earliest measures were adopted by Congress to obtain a formal protection for the trade of the country. On the 1st of May, 1782, only ten days after the ratification of peace, Congress ordered a second commission to be prepared for Messrs. Adams,

Franklin and Jay, or either of them, to enter into a treaty of commerce with Great Britain. But this commission appears to have accomplished nothing in their attempts to negotiate with that power. They assembled at Paris in August, 1785, and were successful in their negotiations of treaties of commerce with several powers of continental Europe. Mr. Hartley, the British Plenipotentiary who signed the definitive treaty, was notified that the American Commissioners were furnished with powers for entering into a treaty of amity and commerce with his nation. He wrote to the court of London for instructions, and received a letter declaring the friendly disposition of the English government towards the United States and their readiness to receive proposals for commercial regulations; but Mr. Hartley was soon after recalled. The Commissioners then addressed the Duke of Dorset, the British Ambassador at the court of France, on the subject. The Duke answered that he was authorized by the British ministers to say that they would take into consideration any proposals coming from the United States for the mutual benefit of the two countries; but that the British court proposed, as a previous stipulation, that the United States should send a minister properly authorized, and vested with the necessary powers, to London, as more suitable to the dignity of either power, than would be the carrying on at any third place negotiations of so great importance. The Commissioners replied, December 9, 1784, to the Duke, that they had full power to treat and conclude a treaty, and were willing to repair to London for that purpose, as they were not limited by their instructions to any place. That they were not authorized to answer the proposition for a minister to reside at the court of Britain, but that they would send a copy of the Duke's letter to Congress, who would determine upon it according to their wisdom. In a subsequent letter, dated March 26, 1785, the Duke informed the Commissioners that he was instructed to learn from them what was the real nature of the powers with which they were invested—whether they were merely commissioned by Congress, or had received separate powers from the respective States. "The apparent determination of the respective States," says the Duke, "to regulate their own separate interests, renders it absolutely necessary towards forming a permanent system of commerce, that my court should be informed how far the Commissioners can be duly authorized to enter into any engagements with Great Britain, which it may not be in the power of any one of the States to render totally fruitless and ineffectual." On the 16th of May, the Commissioners wrote the Duke that they had delayed acknowledgment of his letter, in expectation of receiving further instructions from Congress. They now informed his Grace that Congress, on the 24th of February, appointed a minister plenipotentiary to reside at the court of his Britannic Majesty, who proposed to proceed to London in the course of two or three months, rendering a more particular answer unnecessary. This correspondence is curious, as showing the weakness of the old confederacy of States in the eyes of Europe, and the feelings of the English government towards America at that time. Mr. Adams in a letter to Mr. Jay, then United States Secretary for Foreign Affairs, alluding to the Duke of Dorset's letter, remarks that from the limitation in the articles of confederation with regard to treaties of commerce would probably arise a great deal of difficulty. "If the British minstry wish and seek for delay, (he remarks) this will be their pretext." In another letter, April, 1785, Mr. Adams reminds Mr. Jay that Mr. Hartley, the British Commissioner, on the negotiation of the treaty of peace, had proposed in 1781 to the American Commissioners, in the name of the King, and his minister, Mr. Fox, that ministers should be exchanged immediately, between Congress and the British court. Mr. Adams adds:—You have received before now the formal proposition transmitted to us through the Duke of Dorset, to the same effect. The appointment of Mr. Temple, as Consul-General, is a still stronger indication of a real wish in the ministry that this measure may be pursued, and of a secret consciousness that they shall be obliged to treat. I make no scruple, no hesitation to advise that a minister may be sent; nor will I be intimidated from giving this advice, by any apprehension that I shall be suspected of a design or a desire of going to England myself. Whosoever goes will neither find it a lucrative nor a pleasant employment, nor will he be envied by me. I know that for years, if he does his duty, he will find no personal pleasure or advantage. But the measure of sending a minister to England appears to me the cornerstone of the true American system of politics in Europe; and, if it is not done, we shall have cause to repent it for a long time when it will be too late."

In the Continental Congress, on the 31st January, 1785, it was resolved, on motion of Robert R. Livingston, that a Minister Plenipotentiary be appointed to represent the United States at the court of Great Britain, and that the Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Jay) report instructions. On the 18th of February, Congress resolved that commissions of ministers to any foreign courts, charges d'affaires, and secretaries, should not exceed three years. On the 24th of February, Congress elected by ballot, John Adams, as Minister to the court of Great Britain, and on the 2d of March, Colonel William S. Smith, was appointed Secretary of Legation to the same court. This gentleman had served in the army during the Revolutionary war, and was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of one of the battalions raised by the State of Massachusetts. He was successively, Aid to General Sullivan, Inspector and Adjutant General under Lafayette, and finally Aid to General Washington, who, at the close of the war, certified to his great fidelity, bravery, and good conduct in the several military stations he had held. Colonel Smith, on his diplomatic appointment, immediately proceeded to London, where he joined Mr. Adams, on the 25th of May, 1785. They were not previously acquainted, but the intelligence, zeal, and activity of Colonel Smith, commended him to the favor of Mr. Adams, whose daughter he married, while he was attached to the embassy. The correspondence of Col. Smith with Secretary Jay is highly interesting. He visited the various courts of the continent of Europe during periods of leisure, and took great pains to make himself useful, by communicating valuable information, collected during his travels, for the benefit of his own government. His example is worthy of imitation by some of the young gentlemen in our times, of whom we seldom hear anything, after their appointment as Secretaries of Legation and their departures for Europe.

Mr. Adams, who was also Minister to Holland, while acting as one of the commissioners to negotiate treaties at Paris, on receiving his appointment as Minister to England, concluded to repair to London without returning to the Hague to take leave of the Dutch government. He felt under great obligations to the latter, as he had negotiated a large loan for the United States in Holland, which relieved many of the pressing demands on the government. He proposed to make a special visit to Holland, or otherwise to take leave of that government in a respectful letter. Previous to his departure from Paris, the Duke of Dorset called on him with his congratulations, and offers of his services in England. "He then told me (writes Mr. A.) that I must be in London time enough to pay my respects to the King on the 4th of June, his birthday; to that end I must carry over from hence a fine new coat, ready made, for that it was a rule of etiquette that for everybody to have new clothes upon that day, who went to court, and very rich ones, and that my family must be introduced to the Queen. I told him I was sorry to hear that, but that I hoped it was not indispensable, for that at the court of Versailles, the families of Ambassadors only were required to be presented, and Ministers Plenipotentiaries and Envoys had their option; my family had chosen to avoid it in France, for many reasons. He said, that in England it was otherwise as to etiquette and the ladies and daughters of all the Ministers must be presented to the Queen. I hope, sir, you will think this an immaterial or a trifling conversation,

when you consider that the single circumstance of presenting a family to court will make a difference of several hundred pounds sterling in my inevitable annual expense. This is not the first serious lecture that I have had upon the subjects of etiquette and even dress. There is a certain appearance in proportion to rank, which all the courts of Europe make a serious point of exacting from everybody who is presented to them. I need not say to you, sir, that American ministers have never yet been able to make this appearance at court; they are now less able to do it than ever."

The appearance of a minister plenipotentiary to a country heretofore in colonial subjection to the British crown, was a novel spectacle throughout Europe, as well as in England. Nor could the circumstance fail to wound the pride of the British courtiers and attention, particularly by the Marquis of Carmarthen, who was Secretary of State in the cabinet then recently formed by the younger Pitt as Premier. Arriving in London on the 25th of May, 1785, Mr. Adams, by request, called on the Secretary the following day and presented his credentials. On the 1st day of June, he was presented to King George III. by the Marquis, and was received by his Majesty in his private closet, where, after the usual salutations, and in conformity to etiquette on such occasions, he made a brief speech to the King, in which, among other remarks, he said—"The appointment of a minister from the United States to your Majesty's court, will form an epoch in the history of England and of America. I think myself more fortunate than all my fellow-citizens in having the distinguished honor to be the first to stand in your Majesty's royal presence in a diplomatic character, and shall esteem myself the happiest of men if I can be instrumental in recommending my country more and more to your Majesty's royal benevolence, and of restoring an entire esteem, confidence, and affection, or, in better words, the old good nature, and the old good humor, between people, who though separated by an ocean and under different governments, have the same language, a similar religion, and kindred blood."

To this the King replied with much emotion—"Sir, the circumstances of this audience are so extraordinary, the language you have now held is so extremely proper, and the feelings you have discovered so justly adapted to the occasion, that I must say, that I not only receive with pleasure the assurance of the friendly dispositions of the United States, but that I am very glad the choice has fallen upon you to be their minister. I wish you, sir, to believe, and that it may be understood in America, that I have done nothing in the late contest but what I thought myself indispensably bound to do, by the duty which I owed to my people. I will be very frank with you. I was the last to consent to the separation; but the separation having been made and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an independent power. The moment I see such sentiments and language as yours prevail, and a disposition to give this country the preference, that moment I shall say, let the circumstances of language, religion and blood have their natural and full effect." After this answer, the King inquired of Mr. Adams whether he came last from France? and being answered in the affirmative by his characteristic familiarity, he, with a smile said to him, "There is an opinion among some people that you are not the most attached of all your countrymen to the manners of France." Mr. Adams, surprised at the remark, said, "That opinion, sir, is not mistaken; I must avow to your Majesty I have no attachment but to my own country." The King quickly replied, "An honest man will never have any other."

"The conversation with the King (writes Mr. Adams) will form their own judgment if I may expect from it a residence less painful than I expected, as so marked an attention from the King will silence many grumblers; but we can infer nothing from all this concerning the success of my mission."

On the 10th June, Mr. Adams was presented to Queen Charlotte by the Lord Chamberlain, and having been previously informed by her Secretary of State that a speech would be expected from him on the occasion, he made his compliments to the Queen, who was attended by the ladies of the court, in the following words:—

"Madam, among the circumstances which have rendered my mission to his Majesty desirable to me, have ever considered it as a principal one, that I should have an opportunity of making my court to a great Queen, whose royal virtues and talents have rendered her beloved and admired in America, as well as in all nations of Europe, as an example to princesses and the glory of her sex. Permit me, madam, to recommend to your Majesty's royal goodness, a rising empire, and an infant virgin. To a philosophical mind like your Majesty's, there cannot be a more pleasing contemplation than this prospect of doubling the human species, and augmenting, at the same time, their property and happiness. It will, in future ages, be the glory of these kingdoms, to be peopled that country, and to have sown there those seeds of science, of liberty, of virtue, and permit me, madam, to add, of piety, which alone constitute the property of nations, and the happiness of the human race. After venturing upon such high insinuations to your Majesty, it seems to be descending too far to ask, as I do, your Majesty's royal indulgence to a person, who is indeed unqualified for court, and who owes his elevation to his distinguished honor of standing before your Majesty, not to any circumstances of his own, but to the abilities, and merely to an ardent devotion to his native country, and some little industry and perseverance in her service."

The Queen answered—"I thank you, sir, for your civilities to me and my family, and am glad to see you in my country." A few days after, the Secretary of Legation, Col. Smith, and Mrs. Adams and daughter, were presented at court and well received.

Although the British ministry did not think it proper or expedient to send a minister plenipotentiary to the United States, after the arrival of Mr. Adams in London, they appointed Mr. John Temple, (afterwards Sir John T.) Consul General, who arrived in New York in November, 1785, and presented his credentials as Consul-General for the United States to Secretary Jay. The question was submitted to Congress, whether he should be received or rejected. By the advice of Mr. Jay, he was recognized by an act of Congress, as Consul-General for Great Britain throughout the United States, as a matter of favor, and not as a matter of course, there being no treaty of commerce between the two nations to give right to send consuls. Mr. Temple expressed his cordial wishes for mutual accommodation, but was understood to be opposed to a commercial treaty. He remained in the United States, residing in New York, as Consul General until his death in 1798. He was son of Robert Temple, Esq., and succeeded his kinsman, Sir Richard Temple, in 1785, as baronet. He married a daughter of Governor Bowdoin, of Massachusetts.

Mr. Adams was of opinion that Congress should insist upon a minister plenipotentiary being sent from England to the United States, even so far as to recall him if it were not done. The British ministers were informed, through Mr. Adams, that Congress expected a minister to be sent to the United States, and were ready to receive and treat him with the respect due to his sovereign.

Mr. Adams made repeated but ineffectual efforts to obtain a settlement of matters in dispute between England and the United States, and to conclude a treaty of commerce; and as the British court declined sending a minister to this country, the American minister, in October, 1787, at his request, had leave to return home. Congress, at the same time, expressed their high sense of the services which Mr. Adams had rendered to the United States, "in the execution of the various important trusts committed to him; and presented to him their thanks for the patriotism, perseverance, integrity, and diligence with which he had ably and faithfully served his country." He had his audience of leave with the King on the 20th February, 1788, when his Majesty said—"Mr. Adams, you may with great truth assure

the United States that whenever they shall fulfil the treaty on their part, I, on my part, will fulfil it in all its particulars. I am sure I wish you a safe and pleasant voyage, and much comfort with your family and friends."

The Continental Congress declined appointing a successor to Mr. Adams at the British court, and these matters stood until after the organization of the government under the constitution, in 1789. President Washington authorized Governor Morris, who was then in Europe, on his own private business, to act as government agent, for the purpose of ascertaining whether, if another minister were appointed, the British government would reciprocate the compliment, and also what their views might be as to carrying into full execution the treaty of peace, and entering into commercial arrangements. A promise to reciprocate the appointment of minister was readily made, but on the other points Mr. Morris could obtain little satisfaction, and his pride was touched at the indifference with which American affairs seemed to be regarded in England.

The strength and dignity added to the American government under the constitution, had its effect on foreign nations. Great Britain at last condescended to appoint a minister plenipotentiary to the United States in the person of George Hammond, Esq., who arrived in this country, and presented his credentials in August, 1791. Soon after his arrival a correspondence was opened between him and Mr. Jefferson, Secretary of State, on the subjects in controversy by the treaty of 1783. The British minister, by sending an authority to conclude a commercial treaty, the consideration of these subjects was postponed. The limited powers of Mr. Hammond was matter of just complaint in the United States against the British government. Negotiations in relation to the fisheries, however, were attended with no better success than on the other. In 1792 Thomas Pinckney, of South Carolina, was appointed by President Washington and the Senate, Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain. He is considered an extraordinary figure in the diplomatic history of the United States, by the extraordinary condition of Europe. It was the beginning of a system of blockades and oppressive acts committed by the belligerents, that, together with the American embargo, rendered the commerce of the United States, indicated a serious wound upon the prosperity of the country, and in the end, led, after an interval of nearly twenty years unproductive negotiation, to a war with Great Britain.

The spring of 1793 the United States was against England and Holland. The United States had treaties of amity with these powers, and with France a treaty of alliance, made in 1778. Soon after the state of war in Europe was known in the United States, the President issued a proclamation, that, together with the United States, indicated a serious wound upon the prosperity of the country, and in the end, led, after an interval of nearly twenty years unproductive negotiation, to a war with Great Britain.

This has been considered one of the boldest and most decided measures adopted by Mr. Washington during his administration. It was one of the most important and successful of his political history, as having awakened at the moment the utmost respect and veneration for the United States, among candid men of our own times, unprejudiced by the politics of former days, who doubt whether any measure proposed by the President has been in the end, accompanied with more good consequences to the nation. "It confirmed at the time," (says Lyman), "the neutrality of the country; and consequently, extended to trade and commerce all the benefits of the treaty of 1783. The nation was satisfied, that the Executive at least, was determined not to take part with France. This nomination (of Mr. Jay) settled the question of neutrality for many years. The oppressive acts of the belligerents were thereby rendered inoperative. America comparatively suffered little; and though not a stipulation in favor of neutral rights was made in Jay's treaty of 1794, Great Britain appeared to rest, for a moment, from the unjust increase of her naval power on the ocean. America escaped a war at that time, and the escaped an civil strife in its consequences. The warring wars of the French revolution were just then beginning; and if this country had, at that early period, with all the heat and excitement of the moment, been hurried into the fray, no one could have meted out the degree of honor or dishonor that would have attended her course, or have foretold the disasters that would have overtaken her own country. Had she taken the side of France, she would have lost her into a war with one of the great belligerents; but this was toward the close of a scene of which she had been for twenty years a spectator. The distance of America from Europe, the youth and vigor of her population, the abundance of her resources, the entire absence of every species of military armament, powerfully combined to point out the course she should adopt. This was a most extraordinary period, not only from the remarkable circumstances that surrounded it, but from the universal and overwhelming political infatuation. The government of the United States, depending solely on opinion, had to contend with this spirit. And that opinion, to which it looked for support and guidance, was of itself exceedingly infected and bewildered."

The conduct of the British government at the time had greatly embarrassed Washington's administration. The western forts on the lakes were still held by the British, and the American vessels were seized on their way to French ports, and American seamen were impressed into the British navy. The President, after many remonstrances with the British government, was compelled to put at meeting, by a treaty, in 1794, the long pending question of the seizure of the United States in a war with England, unless the calamity could be averted by negotiation. John Jay, who was then Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, having been confirmed by the Senate, arrived in London in June, 1794. Colonel John Trumbull, an artist, accompanied Mr. Jay, as Secretary. Gen. Thomas Pinckney, then minister of the United States at the Court of St. James, received the special minister with courtesy, and the greatest cordiality, and proceeded to reside at the British residence throughout the negotiation. The reception of Mr. Jay by the British government was calm and decorous, and his own conduct was quiet and conciliatory. The younger Pitt was prime minister, with a Tory cabinet and party, and the negotiations were conducted by Lord Grenville, who was then Secretary of State, was appointed to meet Mr. Jay, with full powers to confer and conclude a treaty. The negotiation was difficult and complicated in the extreme. To facilitate the discussion of matters in dispute, it was proposed by Mr. Jay, and agreed to by Lord Grenville, to dispense with the usual form of diplomatic notes, and to meet and discuss in convention the points in controversy. No notes were taken of these conversations, the two ministers being present at all meetings, and the discussions were, at length, after a long and tedious negotiation, the work was brought to an amicable termination, by the terms agreed upon for a treaty, and then secretaries and copyists had ample occupation. The treaty was signed on the 11th of September, 1794. Three objects were contemplated by Mr. Jay's instructions. These were, a compensation for the losses sustained by American merchants in consequence of the British orders in council, a settlement of the existing disputes relating to the treaty of peace of 1783, and commercial treaty. The treaty was to remain in force for twelve years. In a letter to the Secretary of State, Mr. Jay observed, "The difficulties which retarded its accomplishment, frequently being put at meeting, by Lord Grenville, they have at last yielded to modifications, and to that mutual disposition to agree which reconciled Lord Grenville and myself to an unusual degree of trouble and application. I have no reason to believe or conjecture that a treaty more favorable to us is attainable."

Mr. Jay returned to the United States in the spring of 1795. It is well known that this treaty was exceedingly unpopular with the democratic or republican party in the United States. President Washington submitted it to the Senate, on the 6th June, 1795, and it was ratified by a vote of 24 to 7, on the 24th of that month, with the exception of one article which regulated the trade between the United States and the West Indies. The President signed the treaty in August, and it was ratified in the usual form on October 24.

The treaty restored the posts on the western frontier to the Americans, they having been held by the English for twelve years, in violation of the treaty of 1783. With this exception, it removed every barrier to the free trade of the United States, and by England to impress her own seamen when found on board neutral vessels at sea. Great commercial privileges were secured, contributing to the wealth and prosperity of the United States. The compensation for British spoliation of American commerce, secured by this treaty, amounted to over ten millions of dollars, which was paid to American merchants. The treaty ratified by Great Britain was laid by the President before Congress, March 1, 1796. Attempts were made in the House to refuse the ratification, and to carry it into effect, but, after long debates, the requisite laws were passed by a small majority.

"The ratification of this treaty," says Lyman, "may be considered the proper solid foundation of the commercial treaty of the United States. It was the first act of the government that proved the stability of the federal constitution. It was a severe trial; and the steadiness with which the government bore the burden, may be said to have secured in some degree to the personal character of the President."

The treaty of 1794, notwithstanding the advantages gained by it—among which was the fact that war was probably averted thereby—in reality settled but few of the questions in dispute between England and France, and it was to be expected that the peace or rather truce, of Amiens, in 1802, afforded a short respite, but, wide that slight chance, it must be considered that the two belligerents waged a maritime war upon the United States from 1792 to 1812.

Rufus King succeeded Thomas Pinckney as Minister to the Court of St. James, in 1796. He remained in England until 1803. He discussed with the British ministry the principal provisions of maritime law in which this country feels an interest; though with the exception of two conventions in relation to Jay's treaty of 1794, he did not succeed in agreeing on any formal instrument regulating the commerce, or defining the rights of neutrals. Mr. King returned to this country in 1803, and was succeeded by James Monroe. Early in 1804, Mr. Monroe proposed to the British ministry a convention regulating the right of search, blockades, contrabands, &c. Mr. King had previously paid much attention to the subject of impressment of American seamen. But the British government refused to settle that and other questions of maritime rights, and from that period to 1812 the American commerce was in a state of uncertainty and dissatisfaction, protection of acts of parliament.

Mr. Pitt died in January, 1806, and a whig ministry coming into power, in which Mr. Fox was Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the administration was determined to make fresh and stronger efforts for a maritime treaty. In May, 1806, a commission was issued appointing Mr. Monroe still resident in London, and William Pinckney, of Maryland, jointly and severally, to negotiate a maritime treaty, and Envoys Extraordinary at the Court of St. James. Mr. Pinckney died in September, but a whig ministry was still continued in power. The Commissioners succeeded in concluding with Lord Holland and Auckland, a treaty of amity, navigation, and commerce, on the 21st December, 1806. Although this instrument was not ratified by the United States, this important event in the diplomatic history of the country. It was mainly a renewal of the principal provisions in Jay's treaty of 1794. President Jefferson, without consulting the Senate, refused to ratify this treaty, principally because it did not contain a provision against impressments on the high seas. England has always insisted on the abstract right of impressments; not so much upon the amount of the number of the seamen in foreign service, as to prevent them from leaving her own, and she maintained her right to take her seamen from foreign merchant vessels, whether naturalized or not in the United States or elsewhere.

Mr. Monroe returned home, and Mr. Pinckney remained in London, as Minister, until 1811, when he also returned home, leaving Mr. John Spear Smith as Charge d'affaires. The same year he was succeeded by John Russell. Mr. Russell was sent to the United States in 1810, with instructions to settle the dispute respecting the outrage upon the frigate Chesapeake. But his mission was unsatisfactory. The Chesapeake affair was finally settled by Mr. Foster, in November, 1811, on terms proposed by Mr. Russell.

War with Great Britain was declared by the United States, in June, 1812; and early in 1813, President Madison accepted the offer of mediation made by the Emperor of Russia, and appointed commissioners to negotiate a peace with Great Britain. The British ministry refused the mediation of Russia, but offered to negotiate direct with the United States. This negotiation terminated in a peace concluded at Ghent, the 24th of December, 1814, and ratified by the President and Senate in February, 1815. This diplomatic question was settled by acts of Congress and Parliament, in 1830—

UNITED STATES TREATIES WITH GREAT BRITAIN.  
1. Provisional articles of peace, November 30, 1782, negotiated by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Jay.  
2. Amistice, declaring a cessation of hostilities, January 20, 1783, negotiated by Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Jay.  
3. Definitive treaty of peace, September 3, 1783, negotiated at Paris, ratified by Congress, January 14, 1784.  
4. Treaty of Commerce and Consular Rights, signed at London, September 11, 1794, negotiated by John Jay, ratified by the President and Senate, June 20, 1795.  
5. Convention of Commerce and Consular Rights, signed at London, September 11, 1794, negotiated by John Jay, ratified by the President and Senate, June 20, 1795.  
6. Treaty of Peace and Amity, negotiated at Ghent, December 24, 1814, by James, Lord Gambia, Henry Goulbourne, and John Russell, ratified by the President and Senate, February 17, 1815.  
7. Convention to regulate commerce between the United States and Great Britain, signed at London, July 3, 1815, by Adams, Clay, and Galatin, on the part of the United States, and Lord Gambia, on the part of Great Britain. Ratified by the President and Senate, July 27, 1815, and by the President and Senate, Dec. 22, 1815.  
8. Convention for the exchange of prisoners, boundaries, &c., signed at London, October 24, 1815, negotiated by Rush, on the part of the United States, and Robinson and Goulbourne on the part of Great Britain. Ratified by the President and Senate, April 20, 1816.  
9. Convention of St. Petersburg, of the 12th July, 1822, respecting indemnification for slaves taken during the war of 1812, negotiated by Adams, on the part of the United States, and Count Capo d'Istria, on the part of Russia, and Charles de Witte, Minister Plenipotentiary of Great Britain. Ratifications exchanged Jan. 10, 1823.  
10. Convention awarding the amount of indemnification made by the United States to Great Britain, negotiated at London Nov. 13, 1826, by Galatin on the part of the United States, and Wm. Huskisson and Henry U. Adolphus on the part of Great Britain. Ratifications exchanged Jan. 10, 1827.  
11. Decision of commissioners under the fourth article of the treaty of Ghent, respecting certain islands in the Bay of Passamaquoddy, adjudicated by John Holmes and Thomas Barclay.  
12. Declaration of commissioners under fourth article of treaty of Ghent.  
13. Decision of commissioners under sixth article of treaty of Ghent, respecting the northern boundary to a friendly sovereignty, negotiated at London, Sept. 1827, by Galatin, for the United States, and Charles Grant and Henry U. Adolphus, for Great Britain. Ratified by the President and Senate, March 14, 1828.  
14. Treaty of Washington, settlement of northern boundary question, negotiated at Washington in 1842, by Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, and Lord Ashburton, British Minister. Ratified by the Senate Aug. 30, 1842.  
15. Treaty of Peace, signed at Washington, June 30, 1846, by James Buchanan, Secretary of State, and Richard Schomburgk, British Minister. Ratified by the Senate June 18, 1846.

UNITED STATES MINISTERS, ETC., TO GREAT BRITAIN.  
Appointed.  
John Adams, Mass., Minister Plenipotentiary.....1782  
George Hammond, N. Y., Charge d'affaires.....1791  
Thomas Pinckney, S. C., Minister Plenipotentiary.....1792  
John Jay, N. Y., Special.....1794  
Rufus King, N. Y., Minister Plenipotentiary.....1796  
James Monroe, Virginia, do.....1803  
William Pinckney, Md., do.....1806  
John Spear Smith, Charge.....1806  
John Russell, N. Y., do.....1811  
John Quincy Adams, Mass., Minister Plenipotentiary.....1815  
Richard Rush, Pennsylvania,